

How The
Desire of Ages
Was Written

Robert W. Olson

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An Introductory Statement to the Document, "Exhibits
Relating to the Writing of The Desire of Ages"

The Desire of Ages is, for many Seventh-day Adventists, their favorite source of spiritual nourishment outside the Bible. Its deep devotional tone and strikingly beautiful phrases, combined with its Christ-centered theme, make this much-loved masterpiece unique, even among the works of Ellen White.

The story of how The Desire of Ages was written probably will never be fully told, for no one living knows the complete story, with all its details. However, an examination of the available sources does provide many illuminating insights into the question of how this perennial best seller came into existence.

Ellen White's Books on the Life and Teachings of Jesus

Ellen White's writing on the life of Christ began in 1858, following her visit to Lovett's Grove, Ohio, where many scenes from the age-long conflict between Christ and Satan were revealed to her in vision. Her written account of that vision, as found in Spiritual Gifts, Vol. I, includes over fifty pages on the life of Christ.

In 1876 and 1877, Ellen White rewrote and enlarged her narrative of Christ's life and work so that it comprised more than 640 pages in Spirit of Prophecy, Volumes II and III. Then, in the 1890's, she expanded the account still further, until it filled three books, Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, The Desire of Ages, and Christ's Object Lessons.

Editorial Assistance

Even though she was inspired in the fullest sense, Ellen White did not always use perfect grammar, spelling, punctuation, or sentence and paragraph construction in her writing. She felt this shortcoming strongly throughout her entire life. In 1873, she lamented, "My heart is inexpressibly sad. . . . I am not a scholar. . . . I am not a grammarian" (Entries for January 10

and 11, 1873, pp. 10-11).^{*} Twenty years later she again mourned over her inadequacy when she declared, "I lay down my pen and say, Oh Lord, I am finite, I am weak and simple and ignorant. Thy grand and holy revelations I can never find language to express" (p. 31, par. 4).

Feeling as she did, it is quite understandable that Ellen White should seek skilled literary help in the preparation of her manuscripts for publication. When working on the Spiritual Gifts series, from 1858 to 1864, she was assisted by her husband who was a qualified schoolteacher. (See Selected Messages, Book I, p. 50). In the 1890's, when The Desire of Ages was finally taking shape, her major editorial assistant was Marian Davis.

Ellen White's copyists were entrusted with such tasks as correcting grammar and spelling, eliminating unnecessary repetition, grouping material in paragraphs, and transferring sentences or paragraphs from one manuscript to another "where the same thought was expressed, but not so clearly" (p. 42, par. 3-5). At times, however, a few other key individuals were given additional leeway to make improvements in her writings. For example, Mrs. White was quite willing to have J. H. Waggoner criticize her manuscript and offer suggestions for improvement (p. 12, par. 7). She, in fact, expressed displeasure with Waggoner when he failed to change or improve one of her manuscripts when given an opportunity to do so (p. 13, par. 2).

Dr. David Paulson was also called upon for this kind of service. In 1905, Mrs. White's son, W. C. White, sent the manuscript for The Ministry of Healing to Dr. Paulson with the request, "I wish that in all your reading you would note those places where the thought is expressed in a way to be especially criticized by medical men and kindly give us the benefit of your knowledge as to how to express the same thought in a more acceptable way."^{**}

It was Ellen White's understanding that some Bible writers also had needed editorial assistance, for she wrote concerning the book of Acts, "At that time it was customary for a writer to send his manuscript to someone for examination and criticism. Luke chose Theophilus, as a man in whom he had confidence, to perform this important work." (SDA Commentary, Volume 6, p. 1051).

^{*} Unless otherwise indicated, all references in this statement are to the attached document, "Exhibits Relating to the Writing of The Desire of Ages."

^{**} W. C. White to David Paulson, February 15, 1905, W. C. White Letter File.

Since it is clear that Mrs. White did at times permit, and even seek, help which resulted in the changing of some of her words, a question might be raised about her statement, "The words of someone else would not rightly represent me" (p. 41, par. 4). This comment, it should be noted, was made with reference to one of her copyists in particular and did not include the technical improvements which all of her copyists were supposed to make. It should be emphasized though that Ellen White's copyists and editors did not contribute to the actual writing of her books. Marian Davis made note of this fact when, in response to the publisher's appeal for immediate completion of The Desire of Ages manuscript, she wrote W. C. White, "There is one thing. . . that not even the most competent editor could do--that is to prepare the manuscript before it is written" [i.e., Marian Davis could not do her editorial work until Ellen White had written the manuscript] (p. 34, par. 1).

The Role of Marian Davis

Marian Davis was one of those special people to whom Ellen White looked for more than routine copying and editing. Marian was authorized to drop out needless words (p. 33, par. 1) or at times to change words when necessary (p. 22, par. 1). She helped Mrs. White plan a good number of her books, from the first chapter to the last (p. 39, par. 1).

Marian was Ellen White's "bookmaker" (p. 41, par. 1). She gleaned material, even isolated sentences (p. 28, par. 6; p. 39, par. 1; p. 30, par. 4), on the life of Christ from Ellen White's diaries, letters, and articles (p. 44, par. 3; p. 29, par. 0), which she pasted in scrapbooks. She drew material for The Desire of Ages from these scrapbooks, the bound E. G. White books, and some longer manuscripts (p. 24, par. 4).

In organizing the material into chapters, Marian noted areas on which she had nothing from Ellen White's pen. Apparently the two women had such a close working relationship that Marian felt free to make suggestions to Mrs. White as to what she thought might be lacking from the book. Some of these suggestions Ellen White accepted, but others she rejected. For example, while Marian's advice regarding "the rock, when the water flowed," was accepted for an earlier book (p. 21, par. 1), her recommendation concerning "the building a tower" and "the war of kings" was rejected. Ellen White declared she would not write on these topics unless "the Lord's Spirit seems to lead

me" (p. 25, par. 3).*

Marian also made suggestions to Ellen White with reference to Christ's struggle when tempted to use His divine power (p. 26, par. 5), and the parables of the pearl and the net (p. 23, par. 6). While Ellen White no doubt appreciated these suggestions, it was clearly she herself, and not Marian, who decided what topics she would write on.

Not only did Ellen White do the initial writing, she also took full responsibility for every word which eventually appeared in her books. She explained to her sister Mary, "I read over all that is copied, to see that everything is as it should be. I read all the book manuscript before it is sent to the printer" (p. 44, par. 2). This clearly was her routine method of working. Marian Davis once remarked to Ellen White, "Of course, nothing will go that you do not approve" (p. 30, par. 2).

Sources of Information

(a) Visions. In her first account of Christ's life, written in 1858, Ellen White frequently made such declarations as "I saw," "I then viewed," "I was shown," etc. (p. 10). While she did not lace her later accounts of Christ's life with these expressions, she may actually have seen in vision all the events in Christ's life of which she wrote. In 1889, after mentioning the "betrayal, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus," she commented, "All this had passed before me point by point" (p. 22, par. 3).

However, it is not necessary for us to believe that every single fact mentioned in The Desire of Ages was first seen in vision in order also to believe that the book came from a truly inspired pen. For example, Paul wrote the Corinthians, "There is among you envying, and strife, and divisions" (1 Corinthians 3:3). But he was not shown this in vision. He was informed

* W. C. White recognized that in his mother's experience, the Lord at times overruled even the best human advice. He wrote her once, "I see many reasons why you should not go to the Colorado and California campmeetings. In my opinion, it would be the most unfortunate thing in the world, for you to go and take a large burden of their perplexities. It would do you ten times as much harm, as it would do them good. I am of one mind regarding all the meetings. Do not think of going to any of them, unless the Lord plainly tells you to go, and when He does this, I withdraw all objections. W. C. White to Ellen White, August 18, 1890, W. C. White Letter Book C, p. 58.

in this matter by the members of the house of Chloe. (See 1 Corinthians 1:11). Yet we hold that 1 Corinthians 3:3 was written under inspiration. Ellen White states that although "the Lord did not give him [Paul] a new revelation for that special time. . . the reproof he sent them was as certainly written under the inspiration of the Spirit of God as were any of his other epistles" (Acts of the Apostles, pp. 302-3). If God could speak to the prophets of old "in diverse manners" (Hebrews 1:1), He could most surely do the same in more recent times.

(b) The Bible. Ellen White knew her Bible well, a fact that is attested by the thousands of quotations from the Word of God which run through all of her writings. She used the Bible freely in all of her books on Christ's life and teachings. The Scriptures were to Ellen White the primary source of information regarding what Jesus did and said.

(c) "Bible Histories" and other books. Since the Lord apparently did not reveal the order of biblical events to Ellen White, she found it necessary to seek this information as best she could by her own personal study from various "Bible histories" (p. 21, par. 2). She also appears to have used some books which dealt more specifically with the life of Jesus. She instructed her family in Oakland to send her certain books which she had "laid out." (p. 17, par. 5). She does not name these books, but it is likely that one of them was William Hanna's Life of Christ, since some of her phraseology in Spirit of Prophecy, Volume II, written at this time, is similar to the language of Hanna. The extent and nature of her use of Hanna can be determined only by a careful analysis of these books.* Ellen White used both the Bible and historical sources in the preparation of her other "conflict books" as well. W. C. White states,

In some of the historical matters such as are brought out in Patriarchs and Prophets, and in Acts of the Apostles and in Great Controversy, the main outlines were made very clear and plain to her, and when she came to write up these topics, she was left to study the Bible and history to get dates and geographical relations and to perfect her description of details.--W. C.

For the benefit of those who may wish to make comparisons between Hanna's work and that of Ellen White, the White Estate has reproduced several hundred copies of five chapters drawn from Hanna's Life of Christ. These are available on a complimentary basis while the supply lasts.

White Correspondence File.*

It may come as a new thought to some that Ellen White, in writing an inspired book, should at times draw not only phraseology but certain types of information from previously existing sources. But those who have studied the Bible carefully will not find this thought disturbing inasmuch as they will have noted that the Scripture writers also followed this practice. For example, the Apostle Paul more than once used lines from Greek poets, and Jude included a passage in his little epistle which someone else had written at least a hundred years earlier. (See SDA Bible Commentary on Acts 17:28, 1 Corinthians 15:33, and Jude 14).

The Desire of Ages an Inspired Book

In 1892, as Ellen White once again commenced her writing on the life of Christ, she spoke of "the things which burn in my soul in reference to the mission of Christ." "I know not," she wrote, "how to present subjects in the living power in which they stand before me" (p. 23, par. 4,5).

A year later she asserted that in writing on Christ's life she was tracing words which would communicate to others "the light which the Lord has been pleased in His great mercy and love to give me" (p. 25, par. 2). Some time later, after mentioning several of her books, including The Desire of Ages, she declared, "In my books, the truth is stated, barricaded by a 'Thus saith the Lord.' The Holy Spirit traced these truths upon my heart and mind as indelibly as the law was traced by the finger of God, upon the tables of stone" (p. 44, par. 7).

In the writing of The Desire of Ages Ellen White had help--help from her secretaries and help from some other authors. But first and foremost she had the help of the Lord. It was the Spirit of God who directed and controlled her and who was the Guiding Force in the writing of all her messages.

The Desire of Ages is not just another book on the life of Christ. In marked contrast to other works on Christ's life, it was written under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. It carries within its pages its own divine

* For the most informative and concise statement from her own pen as to her use of the historical material of other authors see her Introduction to The Great Controversy.

credentials. It breathes a heavenly spirit. Here we come face to face with the Lord Himself. Through The Desire of Ages, as through no other book outside the Bible, we may become intimately acquainted with our Saviour. And this blessing will surely come to all who search its pages with hearts and minds that are receptive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

EXHIBITS RELATING TO THE WRITING OF THE DESIRE OF AGES

Arranged Chronologically

(Based On An On-Going Study Of The Sources)

Sabbath and Sunday, March 13-14, 1858, The Whites at Lovett's Grove, Ohio

THE REVIEW AND HERALD.

"Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth."

BATTLE CREEK FIFTH-DAY, MAR. 30. 1858

> March 13th and 14th we enjoyed freedom with the young church at Lovett's Grove. Bro. Holt's labors have been greatly blessed in this place. He thinks about forty are keeping the Sabbath in this place. A few weeks since there were none. We enjoyed great freedom with these brethren. On First-day God manifested his power in a wonderful manner before the crowded assembly. Several decided to keep the Lord's Sabbath and go with the people of God. We feel much indebted to Bro. and Sr. Tillotson who were with us two weeks and conveyed us comfortably with their carriage all the way from where we left the rail road at Green Spring, till we found it again at Freemont where we took the cars for home.

- James White --p. 149.

Sunday, March 14, 1858, The Great Controversy Vision Given at a Funeral Service

In this vision at Lovett's Grove, most of the matter of the Great Controversy which I had seen ten years before, was repeated, and I was shown that I must write it out. That I should have to contend with the powers of darkness, for Satan would make strong efforts to hinder me, but angels of God would not leave me in the conflict, that in God must I put my trust.

After I came out of vision, the afflicted friends, and a portion of the congregation, bore the body to its resting-place. Great solemnity rested upon those who remained.

Monday we commenced our journey homeward with Bro. and Sr. Tillotson. The next day we took the cars at Freemont for Jackson, Mich. While riding in the cars we arranged our plans for writing and publishing the book called the Great Controversy, immediately on our return home.

--Spiritual Gifts, Vol. II, pp. 270-271 (published 1860).

1858, Spiritual Gifts, Vol. I, Published.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

THE

GREAT CONTROVERSY,

BETWEEN

CHRIST AND HIS ANGELS, AND SATAN
AND HIS ANGELS.

BY ELLEN G. WHITE.

BATTLE CREEK, MICH.
PUBLISHED BY JAMES WHITE.

1858

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Source of Information in Spiritual Gifts, Vol. I, 1858.

THE LORD has shown me that Satan was once an honored angel in heaven, next to Jesus CHRIST.
--p. 17

I saw that the SON of GOD was pale and emaciated through fasting and suffering. But his course was marked out, and he must fulfill the work he came to do.
--p. 31

I then viewed JESUS in the garden with his disciples.
--p. 46

I saw that the feeblest angel could have caused that multitude to fall powerless, and delivered JESUS.
--p. 51

But they need not have feared; for I beheld the angelic host watching with untold interest the resting place of JESUS.
--p. 64

I saw the Roman guard, as the angelic host passed back to heaven, and the light and glory passed away, raise themselves to see if it were safe for them to look around.
--p. 68

Next I was shown the disciples as they sorrowfully gazed towards heaven to catch the last glimpse of their ascending LORD.
--p. 79

[Spiritual Gifts, Vols. III and IV, both published in 1864, completed the first writing of the great controversy story. These two volumes dealt largely with Old Testament history. Spiritual Gifts, Vol. II, was an autobiography of Ellen White and was not a part of the great controversy series. As the years passed Ellen White determined to rewrite and enlarge these books. First in the new series, published in 1870, was Spirit of Prophecy, Vol. I, which covered Old Testament history up to the time of Solomon. Next Ellen White concentrated on the life of Christ, which eventually filled most of Spirit of Prophecy, Vols. II and III.]

Wednesday, January 1, 1873, Santa Rosa, California, Ellen White Diary Entry

Wrote ten pages to Elder Littlejohn, after writing closely all day upon my matter for Spirit of Prophecy.--Manuscript 3, 1873, p. 1.

Sunday, January 5, 1873, Petaluma, California, Ellen White Diary Entry

We had three meetings. I spoke at eleven o'clock upon the life and temptation of Christ in the wilderness. I felt the force of the subject I presented before them.--Manuscript 3, 1873, p. 2.

Friday, January 10, 1873, Santa Rosa, California, Ellen White Diary Entry

We rose early to prepare to go to San Francisco. My heart is inexpressibly sad. This morning I take into candid consideration my writings. My husband is too feeble to help me prepare them for the printer, therefore I shall do no more with them at present. I am not

a scholar. I cannot prepare my own writings for the press. Until I can do this I shall write no more. It is not my duty to tax others with my manuscript.--Manuscript 3, 1873, p. 5.

Sabbath, January 11, 1873, San Francisco, California, Ellen White Diary Entry

We rested well last night. This Sabbath morning opens cloudy. My mind is coming to strange conclusions. I am thinking I must lay aside my writing I have taken so much pleasure in, and see if I cannot become a scholar. I am not a grammarian. I will try, if the Lord will help me, at forty-five years old to become a scholar in the science. God will help me. I believe He will.--Manuscript 3, 1873, p. 5.

Sabbath, March 25, 1876, Oakland, California, Ellen White to James White

Dear Husband: . . . Mary Clough* and I will do all we can to forward the work of my writings. I cannot see any light shining to Michigan for me. This year I feel that my work is writing. I must be secluded, stay right here, and I must not let inclination or persuasion of others shake my resolution to keep closely to my work until it is done. God will help me if I trust in Him.--Letter 63, 1876.

Friday, March 31, 1876, Oakland, California, Ellen White to James White

Dear Husband: . . . I enjoy the presence of God and yet my soul is continually drawn out for more of His salvation. I am writing and having freedom in my writing. Precious subjects I am handling. The last I completed or about completed yesterday--Jesus healing the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda. It is a great subject, the discourse of Christ, following the healing as He was accused of the Jews of Sabbath breaking.--Letter 1, 1876, p. 2.

Tuesday, April 4, 1876, Oakland, California, Ellen White to James White

Dear Husband: . . . We have been having company about every day for some days back, but I try to stick to my writings and do as much each day as I dare. I cannot write but one half of a day each day.--Letter 3, 1876, p. 1.

Thursday, April 6, 1876, Oakland, California, Ellen White to James White

(Continuation of letter started on April 4.) I have had much freedom in prayer and sweet communion with God in my waking hours at night and early in the morning. I am gaining some strength, but find that any taxation affects me seriously so that it takes time to recover from it. My trust is in God. I have confidence that He will help me in my efforts to get out the truth and light He has given me

*Mary Clough (rhymes with "how") was the daughter of Ellen White's sister Caroline.

to [give to] His people. Mary is a good help. I appreciate her.--Letter 3, 1876, p. 2.

Friday, April 7, 1876, Oakland, California, Ellen White to James White

Dear Husband: . . . I am writing some every day but cannot confine myself to writing more than one-half a day.

Yesterday Mary Clough, the little girls* and I visited Sister Babcock. We had quite a walk. . . .

The precious subjects open to my mind well. I trust in God and He helps me to write. I am some twenty-four pages ahead of Mary. She does well with my copy. It will take a clear sense of duty to call me from this work to camp meetings. I mean to finish my writings, on one book at any rate, before I go anywhere.--Letter 4, 1876, pp. 1,4.

Sabbath, April 8, 1876, Oakland, California, Ellen White to James White

Dear Husband: . . . In regard to publishing my book here, what do you think of it? The manuscript could at once be put in the hands of the printers. Will you please inform us in reference to this.

I have liberty in writing and I plead with God daily for counsel and that I may be imbued with His Spirit. I then believe that I shall have help and strength and grace to do the will of God.

I am glad you are so free and happy. I never had such an opportunity to write in my life and I mean to make the most of it. . . .

How will it do to read my manuscript to Elders Waggoner and Loughborough? If there is any wording of doctrinal points not so clear as might be, he might discern it. (W. I mean.)--Letter 4a, 1876, pp. 1,2.

Saturday night, April 8, 1876, Oakland, California, Ellen White to Lucinda Hall

Dear Sister Lucinda:** . . . My husband writes that an appeal is to be sent to me from the [General] Conference [Session], but I shall not be moved from that which I believe to be my duty at this time. I have a special work at this time to write out the things which the Lord has shown me. We progress finely, but I cannot write more than half a day. . . .

I have felt that I must neglect everything to get out these writings. I have not attended meetings for two weeks. While Elders Waggoner and

*The "little girls" were Addie and May Walling, Mary Clough's neices, who were raised by Ellen White.

**Lucinda Hall (1839-1929) was for a time employed by Ellen White and came to be one of her best friends.

Loughborough are here, I let them do the work, and I keep all my strength for one purpose--to write. . . .

I want time to have my mind calm and composed. I want to have time to meditate and pray while engaged in this work. I do not want to be wearied myself or be closely connected with our people who will divert my mind. This is a great work, and I feel like crying to God every day for His Spirit to help me to do this work all right. . . .

Matter at Petaluma was needed for labor there next week. I put copy in Elder Waggoner's hand to copy. He just did a miserable job. He did not change anything or improve it at all. I prize Mary more and more every day.--Letter 59, 1876, pp. 1-3.

Sunday, April 16, 1876, "On the Cars from Oakland to Brooklyn", Ellen White to J. White

Dear Husband: . . . I have written quite a number of pages today. Mary is hard after me. She gets so enthusiastic over some subjects. She brings in the manuscript after she has copied to read it to me. She showed me today quite a heavy pile of manuscripts she had prepared. Quite proudly she viewed it. . . .

Willie, his Mary and Mary Clough accompany me to the city tonight. I think that we had better not get any furniture for [the] new house till you are here to select it. . . .

I do not wish my mind diverted from my work to even go and select furniture, but I only suggest. . . .

Oh, how I do long for that social and mysterious connection with Jesus that elevates us above the temporal things of life. It is my anxiety to be right with God, to have His Spirit continually witnessing with me that I am indeed a child of God.

I shall strive to bring out these matters, so precious, to the acceptance of God.

Well, I cannot write you very much news, when I shut myself in my chamber day after day writing, and then when I write you every day, but you must be content with what you can get. We now take the boat.--Letter 8, 1876, pp. 1,2.

Tuesday, April 18, 1876, Oakland, California, Ellen White to James White

Dear Husband: . . . We went to the city Sunday night. I spoke to quite a large congregation of outsiders with acceptance. Taking up the subject of the loaves and fishes with which Jesus by His miraculous power fed about ten thousand people--five thousand men and women and five thousand children--that were continually collecting, after the

Saviour had blessed the small portion of food; Christ walking on the sea and the Jews requiring a sign that He was the Son of God. The neighbor next to the church near the public garden was there. Cragg, I believe his name is. They all listened with wide open eyes, and some [with] open mouths. Mary says she feels provoked that she has written out that subject before she heard me speak upon it. She will now insert some living points she heard that night. She seemed deeply interested. . . .

I see many subjects to write out which must be done with the greatest care. I want this summer, the whole of it, to do this work in. I must stop a day or two in the week and go somewhere or my head will break down. I begrudge every moment that I feel compelled to rest. These intensely interesting subjects weary me far more to write them out than to speak upon them.

I feel that it would not be advisable for me to break off now and go East. Mary does not feel inclined to go. Says she just despises the Eastern climate, but this would not prevent me if I could feel that it was my duty to go. I would feel pleased to meet my brethren and sisters in camp meeting. It is just such work as I enjoy. Much better than the confinement of writing. But this will break up my work and defeat the plans of getting out my books, for I cannot do both--travel and write. Now seems to be my golden opportunity. Mary is with me, the best copyist I can ever have. Another such chance may never be mine. Letter 9, 1876, pp. 1,3.

Friday, April 21, 1876, Oakland, California, Ellen White to James White

Dear Husband: . . . I have just completed quite a lengthy article on several miracles; makes some fifty pages. We have prepared about 150 pages since you left. We feel the best of satisfaction in what we have prepared.--Letter 12, 1876, p. 1.

Monday, April 24, 1876, Oakland, California, Ellen White to James White

Dear Husband: Mary has just been reading to me two articles--one [was] on the loaves and fishes, Christ walking on the water, and stating to His hearers He was the Bread of life, which caused some of His disciples to turn from Him. This takes fifty pages and comprises many subjects. I do think it the most precious matter I have ever written. Mary is just as enthusiastic over it. She thinks it is of the highest value. I am perfectly satisfied with it.

The other article was upon Christ going through the corn field, plucking the ears of corn, and healing the withered hand--twelve pages. If I can, with Mary's help, get out these subjects of such intense interest, I could say, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace." These writings are all I can see now. Mary's interest does not decrease at all. She is just as ardent and anxious as I am that this

work shall be done now before we leave California. Interesting subjects are continually opening to my mind. These subjects I speak upon, which fastens them in Mary's mind.

I believe that the Lord is with us, and His Spirit will impress our hearts. Mary is only just after me. I have not subjects prepared ahead. My heart and mind are in this work, and the Lord will sustain me in doing this work. I believe the Lord will give me health. I have asked Him, and He will answer my prayer. I love the Lord. I love His cause. I love His people. I feel great peace and calmness of mind. There seems to be nothing to confuse and distract my mind, and with so much hard thinking, my mind could not be perplexed with anything without being overtaxed.--Letter 13, 1876, p. 1.

Tuesday, April 25, 1876, Oakland, California, Ellen White to James White

Dear Husband: Last night I received a long letter from Elder Canright urging my attending the camp meetings; also a letter from Brother Rogers of Missouri; also one from Brother Colcord. . . .

They urge me strongly, but I dare not move on their light or obey their call. My work is here at present. I see no light anywhere else and I desire very earnestly to follow the light. If I thought it were my duty to go to these meetings, I would go if my book was never completed, but I feel that now is my time. God has provided me just the help I have longed for so much and prayed for so earnestly. Already Mary has been here five months and the time has gone without accomplishing very much on my work. We are now making excellent time and preparing matter as fast as possible. My mind is on this work and I do not want it withdrawn.

Should I follow my own pleasure or inclination, I should certainly attend the camp meetings. I love the labor connected with the camp meetings much better than I love writing. I enjoy traveling, but I feel that now is my time and opportunity to get out this long-neglected work. . . .

All is quiet here. Nothing to draw me from my work. My mind is not perplexed with harrassing matters of the church or of any kind of difficulties. I am as free from every outside care as I can possibly be anywhere. . . .

I cannot have much news to write for I go nowhere and see no one. Except [for] the boat ride, I have been very much at home. Only called on two or three of the sisters after writing all day.

I cannot merely portion my writing to one-half the day, as some of the time my head troubles me, and then I have to rest, lie down, stop thinking, and take my time for writing when I can do so comfortably. I cannot rush business. This work must be done carefully, slowly, and accurately. The subjects we have prepared are well gotten up. They please me.

I am getting over my nervousness, and I sleep quite well every night except after speaking. I then feel so intensely myself [that] rest and sleep are out of the question. My subjects are to me of living reality, and I make the people feel them.--Letter 14, 1876, pp. 1-3.

Thursday, April 27, 1876, Oakland, California, Ellen White to James White

Dear Husband: . . . We have just completed twenty pages on the parable of the Sower. This was rather a trying subject to write upon, but Mary and I have read it over this afternoon, and we pronounce it excellent, excellent. She says the subjects grow better and better, every one. She is just happy over this work.--Letter 15, 1876, p. 2.

Thursday, April 27, 1876, Oakland, California, Ellen White to Lucinda Hall

Dear Lucinda: . . . I am working to the very extent of my strength, and my prayer is for the Lord to help, strengthen, and bless me in this work. He does do this, or I could not do what I have done. My spirit yearns after God, and I dare not trust myself at all. I am glad my husband is so free. May God continue to bless him is our most earnest daily prayer.

We are, Mary and I, doing our uttermost to get my writings completed in the space of six weeks. If we do, is it thought it will pay for us then to come East? If not, we greatly prefer to remain and write the next volume. . . . I know the people need this book at once, and I want my mind relieved and this burden off my mind.--Letter 61, 1876, p. 1.

Friday, April 28, 1876, Oakland, California, Ellen White to James White

Dear Husband: I have written fifteen pages today. Mary Clough is hard after me. She has copied fifteen pages today--a good, large day's work. As soon as dinner is eaten, I go to Mary's room and she reads me what she has written while I lie on the sofa and rest. Then again at night I go to her room and she reads the rest. She delights in it all as much as myself. Mary is trying her utmost to get these books out. We have so quiet a time. Never have I had such an opportunity in my life before. I will improve it. We have written about 200 pages since you left, all copied, ready for printers. . . .

I feel that I am less than nothing, but Jesus is my all--my righteousness, and my wisdom, and my strength.--Letter 16a, 1876, pp.1,2.

April, 1876, Oakland, California, Ellen White to James White

Dear Husband: . . . Last night I again spoke to the people. This was my text--the words of Christ to the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Peter

answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (See John 6:67, 68). I had perfect freedom. I never felt more sensibly the especial help from God than while speaking. The people sat as if spellbound, wide awake, although the meeting did not close till after nine o'clock. The Spirit of God was upon me.--Letter 18, 1876, pp. 1,2.

Friday, May 5, 1876, Oakland, California, Ellen White to James White

Dear Husband: . . . I have been writing more than usual, which was too much for me. I cannot and must not write more than half a day, but I continue to step over the bounds and pay for it. My mind is on my subjects day and night. I have strong confidence in prayer. The Lord hears me and I believe in His salvation. In His strength I trust. In His strength I shall complete my writings. I cling firmly to His hand with unwavering confidence. We are happy in our work and this is our world for the present. . . .

I never expect so good an opportunity again of writing. May God help me is my continual cry.

If I am blessed with health as I have been hitherto, I shall complete my first book in about four weeks.--Letter 21, 1876, pp. 1-2.

Thursday, May 11, 1876, Oakland, California, Ellen White to James White

Dear Husband: . . . If I get my writings [Spirit of Prophecy, Vol. II] all in manuscript, my part of the work is done and I shall be relieved.--Letter 24, 1876, p. 2.

Cir. Monday, May 22, 1876, On The Train Between Oakland and Sacramento, En Route to the Kansas Camp Meeting, Ellen White to Mary Kelsey-White or Mary Clough

Dear Mary: We are all cheerful and comfortably located in the cars. We like our situation very much. I owe Frank one dollar. Please pay him, and charge to me. Ask Sister Rice to cut out a pattern of the basque she fitted for me. Send a copy to Kansas and have one nicely secured at Oakland. You need not send Walks and Homes of Jesus* when you send the books I laid out.--Letter 27a, 1876.

Thursday, October 19, 1876, Battle Creek, Michigan, Ellen White to W.C. & Mary White

Dear Children Willie and Mary: . . . We have decided to have the printers go on my book and not transport these books across the plains again. Part of the book is here already printed. We shall not have them stereo-typed, because we shall not wait to have matters of my book so very, very exact, but get out this first edition and get it in market. Then

*By Daniel March.

we can take time to get out a more perfect edition on [the] Pacific Coast and have [it] stereotyped, then your father's and my life will be written and printed in the Pacific Printing Office. But we have all used our best judgment and think we had better remain here till December and complete this edition. . . .

Mary Clough feels that she cannot break off from this book again. She wants to see it completed. We will therefore do our utmost to accomplish this object and as soon as [it is] done, come right along.--Letter 45, 1876, pp. 1,2.

Thursday, October 26, 1876, Battle Creek, Michigan, Ellen White to W.C. & Mary White

Dear Children: . . . We are in the very worst drive and hurry getting off my Volume Two, Spirit of Prophecy. Three new forms are already printed. If we remain here four weeks longer we shall have the book completed, and remove from my mind a great burden of care. . . .

I fear if we left immediately the book would be hindered for two months. Mary is driving to the uttermost. . . .

We were never so full of business before. Mary sits up until twelve and one o'clock at night. She works tremendously.--Letter 46, 1876, pp. 1-2.

Thursday, November 30, 1876, Review and Herald Announcement

The Review and Herald.

Battle Creek, Mich., Fifth-Day, Nov. 30, 1876.

Spirit of Prophecy, Vol. II.

We are prepared to speak of this volume, now just issued, as the most remarkable volume that has ever issued from this Office. It covers that portion of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, which is included in the life and mission, teachings and miracles, of Christ here upon the earth. Many have endeavored to write the life of Christ; but their work, as compared with this, seem to be only like the outer garments to the body. Here we have, so to speak, an interior view of the wonderful work of God during this time. And if the reader has a heart that can be impressed, feelings that can be stirred, an imagination that can respond to the most vivid portraiture of the most thrilling scenes, and a spirit to drink in lessons of purity, faith, and love from Christ's divine example, he will find in this volume that which will call into liveliest play all these faculties. But the best of all is the lasting impression it must make for good upon all who read. It should have an unlimited circulation. Post-paid, by mail, as per previous notices, \$1.00. U. S.

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Thursday, February 14, 1878, Review and Herald Announcement

The Review and Herald.

Battle Creek, Mich., Fifth-Day, Feb. 14, 1878.

Spirit of Prophecy, Vol. 3.

This volume, by Mrs. E. G. White, is now ready. It dwells very fully upon the sufferings and death of Christ, his resurrection and ascension to Heaven, and closes with an account of the lives, teachings and persecutions of the apostles. It is written in the same forcible and impressive style as the preceding volumes, and is a book of equally thrilling interest. It will be hailed with gladness everywhere by those best acquainted with sister W. and her work. In style, size and price, it is the same as Vols.

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Sunday, December 8, 1878, Denison, Texas , Ellen White to Mary White

Dear daughter [in-law] Mary: This week we shall commence to live in the new house. It is roomy and a very nice building. . . . Be sure and send me that coarse material like Emma's dress. Please send that double paisley shawl. I have a plan for it. Send my plaid shawl, and you may send two comfortables. Send books, red-covered Jewish Antiquities and the Bible Dictionary. Is Night Scenes of the Bible*there? If so, send it.--Letter 60, 1878, p. 1.

*By Daniel March, published in 1869.

Tuesday, December 22, 1885, Basel, Switzerland; Ellen White to Edson & W.C. White

Dear Children, Edson and Willie: . . . Tell her [Marian Davis*] I just one minute ago read the letters in which she has specified the improvements to be made in articles for Volume 1. I thank her. Tell her that she has a point about Zedekiah's having his eyes put out. That needs to be more carefully worded--also the rock, when the water flowed--something in reference to this. I think I can make the articles specified more full. . . .

Well, my dear Willie and Edson and Emma, let us draw very nigh to God. Let us live daily as we would wish we had lived when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, and when everyone will be rewarded according to his works. I am not cast down nor discouraged, but I feel weighed down as a cart beneath sheaves. We have had several days of beautiful weather. It has commenced raining this afternoon. Tell Mary to find me some histories of the Bible that would give me the order of events. I have nothing and can find nothing in the library here.--Letter 38, 1885, p. 8.

Sunday, January 16, 1887, Basel, Switzerland, W. C. White to B. L. Whitney**

Dear Brother: It is Sunday afternoon. I have received no telegram from Olsen and conclude that their meeting is postponed, therefore I decided not to go to London. . . .

I also enclose a list of books prepared by Sister Davis which she wishes to have examined by some of your party that we may know if any of them will be valuable to us in our Bible study or the preparation of articles on Bible subjects. After reading the memoranda as prepared by Sister Davis I see there is little I need to say. Perhaps you will want some of these in the office library. . . .

You will note what they say about the cuts in Farrar's Life of Christ. This is just the way they talked at first about those in the Child's Life of Christ. . . .

Please buy of Cassell one set [of] Wylie's Prot., one Hanna's *** Life of Christ, and for your library I think you would do well to have a set of Geikie's Hours With the Bible. If you have not already obtained them in New York, you ought to inquire for, and purchase for your library, The Temple and Its Services, Jewish Social Life, Andrew's Life of Our Lord, a good harmony of the Gospels, and other works that will be useful to your wife in preparing notes for the Sabbath School lessons. She ought to have a copy of the latest and best Bible dictionary.--W. C.

*Marian Davis (1847-1904) was a highly skilled secretary and literary assistant to Ellen White. She worked for Ellen White from 1879 until 1904, helping to produce many books, including The Desire of Ages.

**Elder Whitney (1845-1888) bore heavy responsibilities in the publishing work which was centered in Basel.

***William Hanna's Life of Christ was first published in 1863.

White Letter Book A-2, pp. 74-76. (Written from Basel, Switzerland, to B. L. Whitney, who was on business in London, England.)

March, 1889, Battle Creek, Michigan, Ellen White to her Daughter-in Law

Mary, Willie is in meeting early and late, devising, planning for the doing of better and more efficient work in the cause of God. We see him only at the table. Marian will go to him for some little matters that it seems she could settle for herself. She is nervous and hurried and he so worn he has to just shut his teeth together and hold his nerves as best he can. I have had a talk with her and told her she must settle many things herself that she has been bringing Willie. Her mind is on every point and the connections, and his mind has been plowing through a variety of difficult subjects until his brain reels and then his mind is in no way prepared to take up these little minutia. She must just carry some of these things that belong to her part of the work, and not bring them before him nor worry his mind with them. Sometimes I think she will kill us both, all unnecessarily, with her little things she can just as well settle herself as to bring them before us. Every little change of a word she wants us to see. I am about tired of this business.--Letter 64a, 1889, p. 1.

Sunday, May 12, 1889, Ottawa, Kansas, Ellen White to Her Family

Dear Children of the household: . . . I had been, during the forty-five years of experience, shown the lives, the character and history of the patriarchs, and prophets, who had come to the people with a message from God, and Satan would start some evil report, or get up some difference of opinion or turn the interest in some other channel, that the people should be deprived of the good the Lord had to bestow upon them. . . .

I could but have a vivid picture in my mind from day to day of the way reformers were treated, how slight difference of opinion seemed to create a frenzy of feeling. Thus it was in the betrayal, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus--all this had passed before me point by point.--Letter 14, 1889, p. 3.

Sunday, February 14, 1892, Preston, Melbourne, Australia, Ellen White Diary Entry

I try to prevent all movements of my arms lest I should shriek out with pain. I can write with my right hand; can use my arm from the elbow down. The Lord's special blessing comes to me in this. I thank His holy name.

Truth has never been more clearly impressed upon my mind than during this sickness and I praise the Lord that I have voice to express the words He gives me.--Manuscript 29, 1892, p. 2.

Monday, February 15, 1892, Preston, Melbourne, Australia, Ellen White Diary Entry

I have been able to write some upon the life of Christ. I praise the name of the Lord that my reason is spared to me.--Manuscript 29, 1892, p. 3.

Sunday, April 3, 1892, Marian Davis to W. C. White

Since Revel copyrighted the book, "Steps to Christ" before arrangements were made to reserve the right of using any of the matter in "Life of Christ," ought there not to be some understanding with him as soon as possible? It would be quite a task, after the book is completed, to remove from L. C. all the sentences and paragraphs that have been used in "Steps." And as I have said before, in one case--possibly two--I shall want to use rather more than a page from "Steps."--White Estate Document File #393a. (Written from Preston, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.)

Friday, July 15, 1892, Preston, Victoria, Australia, Ellen White to O. A. Olsen*

This is indeed a physical weakness for me, and almost absolute dependence upon others. So new is this experience to me that I have felt amazed that it should be so. But though almost helpless in body, in heart I feel no sense of age.

This week I have been enabled to commence writing on the life of Christ. Oh, how inefficient, how incapable I am of expressing the things which burn in my soul in reference to the mission of Christ! I have hardly dared to enter upon the work. There is so much to it all. And what shall I say, and what shall I leave unsaid? I lie awake nights pleading with the Lord for the Holy Spirit to come upon me, to abide upon me.

I walk with trembling before God. I know not how to speak or trace with pen the large subject of the atoning sacrifice. I know not how to present subjects in the living power in which they stand before me. I tremble for fear lest I shall belittle the great plan of salvation by cheap words. I bow my soul in awe and reverence before God and say, "Who is sufficient for these things?"--Letter 40, 1892, p. 4.

Monday, October 30, 1892, Marian Davis to Ellen White

I want to ask a question about the two parables of the hidden treasure and the merchant man seeking goodly pearls. Do these two parables represent exactly the same thing? It does not seem as if Christ would give two parables to teach exactly the same thing. Is there not some point in which they differ? Might they not represent two different classes who find the truth? The man who finds the treasure is not said

*O. A. Olsen was General Conference president from 1888 to 1897.

to have been seeking for it. He may have come upon it unexpectedly as he was at work in the fields. But when he finds it, he is ready to give all in order to possess it. Then he will diligently search the field for more. How many there are to whom the truth comes that way, unexpectedly, unsought, but who gladly sacrifice for its sake when they discern its preciousness. But the merchant was seeking goodly pearls. So there are earnest and thoughtful minds everywhere who are earnestly seeking for something precious and enduring--something upon which to fix their hopes, and when the truth is received to them, they too receive it with great joy.

Thus through all time the two parables would appeal to two different classes of people. I know the parable of the treasure has been used to represent diligence in searching. But this explanation would not do away with that. Does not the searching come in after he finds that there is treasure hid in the field?

I have gone past these parables in my work, but am anxious to have them brought out just right, and if you can give me any light on them I shall be very thankful.--White Estate Document File #393a. (Written from St. Kilda, Melbourne, to Ellen White who was at Adelaide.)

Thursday, March 16, 1893, Marian Davis to Ellen White

Would it be all right for me to have Sister Tenney copy some of the chapters in life of Christ? It is hard to work in advance, when all my manuscript is in shape so difficult to refer to. Can't tell what has been introduced and what has not. Thought it might be a help to get the manuscript copied.--White Estate Document File #393a. (Written from St. Kilda, Melbourne, to Ellen White who was in New Zealand.)

Wednesday, March 29, 1893, Marian Davis to W. C. White

You will perhaps remember some things I said last spring about the necessity of having the matter from articles and scrapbooks, that might be available for use in the life of Christ, copied, so as to be convenient for reference. Perhaps you can imagine the difficulty of trying to bring together points relating to any subject, when these must be gleaned from thirty scrapbooks [of E. G. White materials], a half-dozen bound volumes, and fifty manuscripts, all covering thousands of pages. . . .

One thing more as to why so much more is needed for life of Christ than for previous books. The material is much more abundant, the range of subjects much greater; the work demands more in every way.--White Estate Document File #393a. (Written from St. Kilda, Melbourne, Australia.)

Monday, May 22, 1893, Marian Davis to Ellen White

As I read over the new chapters on LC [Life of Christ] they seem very precious to me--the lessons of hope and faith, the love and tenderness of the Saviour, and I feel anxious that the book should go to the people. I pray that God will give you strength and will give grace and wisdom to me.--White Estate Document File #393a. (Written from St. Kilda, Melbourne, to Ellen White who was in New Zealand.)

Tuesday, May 23, 1893, Wellington, New Zealand, Ellen White Diary Entry

It is cloudy and raining this morning. I have been writing upon the life of Christ since four o'clock. Oh, that the Holy Spirit may rest and abide upon me, that my pen may trace the words which will communicate to others the light which the Lord has been pleased in His great mercy and love to give to me.--Manuscript 80, 1893, p. 20.

Thursday, June 15, 1893, Wellington, New Zealand, Ellen White to W. C. White

Dear Son Willie: . . . Marian, you know, cannot be closely confined. She is all enthused with hospital work. I am anxious to get out the life of Christ. Marian specifies chapters and subjects for me to write upon that I do not see really need to be written upon. I may see more light in them. These I shall not enter upon without the Lord's Spirit seems to lead me. The building a tower, the war of kings, these things do not burden my mind, but the subjects of the life of Christ, His character representing the Father, the parables essential for us all to understand and practice the lessons contained in them, I shall dwell upon.--Letter 131, 1893, p. 3.

Sunday, July 2, 1893, Wellington, New Zealand, Ellen White to W. C. White

Dear Son Willie: . . . We must begin, very decidedly, to understand where the forthcoming book is to be published, for we must move carefully in the fear of God. . . .

I write some every day on the life of Christ. One chapter sets my mind fresh upon other subjects so that I have several scratch books that I am writing upon. I hardly dare send manuscript by young Linden, fearing it may get lost, and I wish to give more time to some subjects.--Letter 132, 1893, p. 6.

Friday, July 7, 1893, Wellington, New Zealand, Ellen White to W. C. White

Dear Son Willie: . . . I have written you a little bit every mail we heard of that went to Australia, and when Brother Linden went, sent you a letter and manuscript for Fanny and Marian--some on life of Christ and some for Fanny. That on life of Christ can be used for articles for the paper.--Letter 133, 1893, p. 3.

Wednesday, August 2, 1893, Marian Davis to Ellen White

Now, about the book. I am so glad you are writing on the two journeys to Galilee. I was so afraid you would not bring that out. Shall hope to receive something from you before long. There's a good deal of work to be done behind me, but I don't like to turn back if I can help it, rather wait, till I get nearly or quite through, and have all the matter together, and then I can go back once for all, and finish up. That will save me going over the ground more than twice. . . .

I send two chapters on L.C. [Life of Christ] that were left when I sent before. I addressed them and left in the till of W. C. [White]'s trunk. . . .

I shall watch with great interest for the arrival of the promised manuscript. Am so glad you are writing just where you are. There is such a rich field in the teachings of Christ after He left Jerusalem after the Feast of Tabernacles.--White Estate Document File #393a. (Written from Prahran, Melbourne, Australia, to Ellen White who was in New Zealand.)

Tuesday, August 22, 1893, Marian Davis to Ellen White

I have a number of chapters prepared on life of Christ, but cannot get them copied just now. Perhaps I can on vacation. If so, I will send them to you. Am glad you are working on life of Christ and am looking eagerly for manuscript. There are chapters--or parts--that are to be prepared in what I have gone over--some things that were left incomplete, and I can be working on these till I get more manuscript. Of course I have a considerable manuscript ahead of where I am working, but it is not in regular connection, and it will be better to prepare it after I get the intervening links.--White Estate Document File #393a. (Written from Prahran, Melbourne, Australia, to Ellen White in New Zealand.)

Thursday, October 5, 1893, Marian Davis to Ellen White

There are some points I would like to ask about the life of Christ. Wasn't it all through His life on earth, a struggle with Him to restrain His divine power--to keep the level of humanity? Especially in the temptation in the wilderness when Satan came to him saying, If Thou be the Son of God, then for Christ not to assert Himself, not to rebuke the tempter. And in the last temptation, I would like to know if this idea is right--Adam held dominion over the earth, but as subject to Christ. The Son of God was the real, original ruler, and Adam held dominion under him. Adam betrayed to Satan his dominion, but back of that, Christ was the first ruler of the world. Now in the temptation, Satan comes with his stolen title and offers it to Christ, the original ruler, on condition that Christ shall pay him homage. To do this would be to place Satan in supremacy as the original ruler, and Christ to be subordinate to Satan. The intolerable impudence--if I may be permitted the expression--of Satan! It seems as if Christ must have been tempted to blot him out of existence then and there, and bring to an end all

his miserable work. Now, if there is anything to this, I wish it might be brought out, that Christ never asserted Himself, He bore all the misrepresentation and assumption of Satan, and just lived--just let His life shine out, the unfolding of God's eternal love, as the vindication of Himself, and the eternal refutation of all the claims of Satan. Oh, what a wonderful lesson that has for us, not to vindicate or assert ourselves, but to let principle unfold and develop, to let our life speak, while we are silent.

The lessons on the life of Christ seem to excite general interest. Brother Starr draws quite fully from the manuscript chapters. . . .

I am attending the Bible class now. It breaks up my time some, but since they are considering the life of Christ I want to hear it, as any discussion or presentation of that subject brings it up fresh to one's own mind.--White Estate Document File #393a. (Written from Prahran, Melbourne, to Ellen White in New Zealand.)

Wednesday, October 18, 1893, Marian Davis to Ellen White

I hope it will not be necessary for me to work on testimony, at least at present. The Bible studies [at the Australasian Bible School] are on the life of Christ, and I am anxious to keep on that line of thought if possible, if I am to continue the work on the book. There is much yet to be done with the material I have, though, of course, the sooner new matter can be had, the better.

Oh, when I see how we seem to be in the circles of a whirlpool that is sweeping us faster and faster toward the great consummation I do long to see this book go out, to reveal Christ to the people as He is in His beauty. Let the work be done by whomever God shall choose, but Oh, I want to see it done, and I will be so thankful if He will use me anywhere. There is a very great loss in stopping, breaking off the chain of thought and beginning over again. But I am ready to do it, if necessary. But while we are studying the life of Christ and the matter is on my mind it seems like poor policy to work at something else. . . .

I sympathize with you in the constant moving. It must be very wearisome. But what a privilege the New Zealand people are having!

I shall be so glad when we can talk over the work. So many points come up that I want to ask about, and I shall appreciate the privilege of having someone to read the chapters to.

I will send you a few more chapters soon. Brother [W.F.] Caldwell copies for me Sunday forenoons. . . . I am real anxious to get some chapters finished and some gaps filled before going to any other work. . . .

These are busy days, the Bible class coming in the middle of the forenoon is rather inconvenient, but while the life of Christ is studied, I can't afford to lose it, for it is the only thing I have bearing on my work, and it wakes one's mind up to hear the matter talked over.--White Estate Document File #393a. (Written from Prahran, Melbourne, Australia, to Ellen White in New Zealand.)

Thursday, January 18, 1894, Brighton, Victoria, Australia, EGW to W. W. Prescott

[Written in her tent at the Brighton camp meeting to the president of Battle Creek College, concerning a problem in that institution.]

Now I must leave this subject so imperfectly presented, that I fear you will misinterpret that which I feel so anxious to make plain. Oh, that God would quicken the understanding, for I am but a poor writer, and cannot with pen or voice express the great and deep mysteries of God. Oh, pray for yourselves, pray for me.--Letter 67, 1894, p. 10.

1894, Granville, New South Wales, Australia, Ellen White to O. A. Olsen

It is decided in council I shall write on the life of Christ; but how any better than in the past? Questions and the true conditions of things here and there are urged upon me. . . .

I have done scarcely anything on the life of Christ, and have been obliged to often bring Marian to my help, irrespective of the work on the life of Christ which she has to do under great difficulties, gathering from all my writings a little here and a little there, to arrange as best she can. But she is in good working order, if I could only feel free to give my whole attention to the work. She has her mind educated and trained for the work; and now I think, as I have thought a few hundred times, I shall be able after this mail closes to take the life of Christ and go ahead with it, if the Lord will.--Letter 55, 1894, p. 6.

Thursday, October 25, 1894, Granville, New South Wales, Australia, Ellen White to Dr. John Harvey Kellogg.

Marian is working at the greatest disadvantage. I find but little time in which to write on the life of Christ. I am continually receiving letters that demand an answer, and I dare not neglect important matters that are brought to my notice. Then there are churches to visit, private testimonies to write, and many other things to be attended to that tax me and consume my time. Marian greedily grasps every letter I write to others in order to find sentences that she can use in the life

of Christ. She has been collecting everything that has a bearing on Christ's lessons to His disciples, from all possible sources. After the camp meeting is ended, which is a very important meeting, I shall locate myself in some place where I can give myself to the work of writing on the life of Christ. Where that will be is a question that is not settled, but it must be done. . . .

There is much to be done in the churches, and I cannot act my part in keeping up the interest and do the other work that is necessary for me to do without becoming so weary that I cannot devote strength to writing on the life of Christ. I am much perplexed as to what is my duty. . . .

I have about decided to . . . devote all my time to writing for the books that ought to be prepared without further delay. I would like to write on the life of Christ, on Christian Temperance, and prepare testimony No. 34, for it is very much needed. I will have to stop writing so much for the papers, and let the Review and Herald, the Signs of the Times, and all other periodicals go without articles from my pen for this year. All articles that appear under my signature are fresh, new writings from my pen. I am sorry that I have not more literary help. I need this kind of help very much. Fannie could help me a great deal on the book work if she had not so many articles to prepare for the papers, and so many letters and testimonies to edit to meet the demands of my correspondence and the needs of the people. It is of no use to expect anything from Marian until the life of Christ is completed. I wish I could procure another intelligent worker who could be trusted to prepare matter for the press. Such a worker would be of great value to me. But the question is, Where shall I find such an one? I am brain weary much of the time. I write many pages before breakfast. I rise in the morning at two, three, and four o'clock. . . .

You know that my whole theme both in the pulpit and in private, by voice and pen, is the life of Christ. Hitherto nearly all that I have written on this theme has been written during the hours when others are sleeping.--Letter 41, 1895, pp. 1-4.

Monday, December 10, 1894, W. C. White to Miss Julia Malcolm

As regards your questions about Mother's writings you may have noticed in her [public] addresses that she has a full vocabulary and much power of description and at the same time you may have noticed faulty grammatical constructions. Those familiar with her writings find the same characteristics and also we find that as scenes which are similar in character and import are impressed upon her mind that she writes them out rapidly without reference to chronological order or other apparent connection. We are often perplexed by this characteristic in some of the prophetic books of the Bible.

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The secretaries and copyists who prepare Mother's writings for the printer remove repetitions so that the matter may be brought into the allotted space. They correct bad grammar and they fit the matter for publication. They sometimes carry her best expressions of thought from one paragraph to another but do not introduce their own thoughts into the matter. The thoughts and the expressions which you mention are Mother's own thoughts and expressions. With kindest regards.-- W. C. White Letter Book 7, p. 20. (Written from Norfolk Villa, Prospect Road, Granville, N. S. W., Australia, to Julia Malcolm in Brighton, Victoria, Australia.)

Sabbath, August 10, 1895, Marian Davis to Ellen White

Just as long as I can see work to do on the manuscript it is hard for me to leave it. So long as I can work, the greatest rest for me is to see the work advancing. I am not by any means wasting the time, but am doing work that must be done and that there may not be time for by and by. . . . Of course nothing will go that you do not approve. God will help. I feel that He does help.

Yet I don't feel that I could take a vacation until the book is completed. That is, so long as there is work to do on it.--White Estate Document File #393a. (Written from Granville, NSW.)

Monday, November 25, 1895, Marian Davis to Ellen White

We sent the letter for Sydney workers to Brother McCullagh. It was so good. I must keep all the general for my scrapbooks. Of late I have been using the matter gleaned from late letters, testimonies, etc. Have found some of the most precious things, some in those letters to Elder Corliss. They have been to me like a storehouse of treasures. There's something in these personal testimonies that are written with deep feeling, that comes close to the heart. It seems to me the things gathered in this way give a power and significance to the book that nothing else does. I hope the one who copies will not forget to send me a copy of everything.--White Estate Received Correspondence File. (Written from Granville, NSW.)

Sunday, December 22, 1895, Marian Davis to J. E. White

Since these books are sent out without explanation as to the authority by which the author speaks, it was thought best to avoid, as far as we could, statements for which the Bible seems to furnish no proof, or which to the ordinary reader appear to contradict the Bible. Better to give the reader what they will accept and profit by than to excite criticism and questioning that will lead them to discredit the whole. . . .

Sister White says that Christ was twice crowned with thorns, but as the Bible mentions only the second crowning, it was thought best to omit the first, or rather to give the second instead of the first.--White Estate Received Correspondence File.

Monday, April 13, 1896, Marian Davis to A. O. Tait

We have not yet given special attention, in the preparation of manuscript for the new life of Christ, to the closing scenes of the Saviour's life. Of course the matter is not so vivid in Sister White's mind as when she is specially writing or speaking on it, nor can I speak so decidedly on it as after I have worked on the manuscript.--White Estate Received Correspondence File. (Written from Sunnyside, Cooranbong, Australia.)

Sabbath, June 6, 1896, EGW Manuscript, "Illustrations of Heavenly Things"

That which is holy and elevated in heavenly things, I scarcely dare represent. Often I lay down my pen and say, Impossible, impossible for finite minds to grasp eternal truths, and deep holy principles, and to express their living import. I stand ignorant and helpless. The rich current of thought takes possession of my whole being, and I lay down my pen, and say, Oh Lord, I am finite, I am weak, and simple and ignorant; Thy grand and holy revelations I can never find language to express.

My words seem inadequate. I despair of clothing the truth God has made known concerning His great redemption, which engrossed to itself His undivided attention in the only begotten Son of the Infinite One. The truths that are to last through time and through eternity, the great plan of redemption, which cost so much for the salvation of the human race, presenting before them a life that measures with the life of God--these truths are too full, deep, and holy for human words or human pen to adequately express.--Manuscript 23, 1896, p. 2.

Friday, July 16, 1896, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia, EGW to Mrs. Wessels

Dear Sister Wessels: . . . The manuscript for the "Life of Christ" is just about to be sent to America. This will be handled by the Pacific Press. I have employed workers to prepare this book, especially Sister Davis, and this has cost me three thousand dollars. Another three thousand will be needed to prepare it to be scattered broadcast through the world in two books. We hope that they will have a large sale. I have devoted little time to these books, for speaking, writing articles for the papers, and writing private testimonies to meet and repress the evils that are coming in, keeps me busy.--Letter 114, 1896, p. 3.

Monday, November 23, 1896, Marian Davis to C. H. Jones

This morning Brother White handed me your letter of October 6, with list of cuts etc., asking me to write to you in regard to it. Had I seen them before leaving Cooranbong, where my lists and MS are, I could have written more intelligently. As it is, I can mention but few points.

I. Transposition of chapters. In the order of chapters we followed Andrews'* Harmony, as given in his Life of Christ. He is generally regarded as the very best authority, and is quoted by leading writers. We know of no better arrangement than his. (The year between the first and second passover seems to have been a period of comparative quiet and seclusion; that between the second and third, of activity and publicity.) Those who read the MS, Professor Prescott and Sister Burnham, agreed with our arrangement. We would not like to see this chapter transposed.

"Imprisonment and Death of John." The place of this chapter is optional, of course. But no one has heretofore objected to its present position. As to the reference to John in Chapter 28, coming after the account of his death, this is not unusual in other books. See Geikie and many others. If the chapter were transposed, it would probably be best to omit the first paragraph. But not having the MS to refer to, I cannot speak with much positiveness.--W. C. White Letter Book 10-A, p. 17a. (Written from Ashfield, N. S. W., Australia, to C. H. Jones in Oakland, California.)

March 11, 1897, Marian Davis to C. H. Jones

Your letter of February 2 received by last mail. I am very glad to know of the decisions in regard to the size and style of the book. I believe the plan is right, and I am thankful that no plates have been made to be thrown aside.

We noted the titles mentioned--"Desire of Ages" and "Desire of All Nations." Sister White prefers the former, as I do, with all others who have expressed an opinion.

You ask me if I cannot, by this mail, send to the press the manuscript of the parables. You also ask when the balance of the manuscript for the last book will be ready. And you request Sister White to write on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. I fully agree with you that the "Life of Christ" should be closed up as soon as possible. But let me state the situation: Considerably more than a year ago, Sister White began writing on the trial and crucifixion of Christ. She has a number

* Samuel J. Andrews, The Life of Our Lord upon the Earth, first published in 1862. The 1891 edition was in Ellen White's library. Andrews' Harmony of the Gospels appears on pp. xxi to xxvii.

of manuscripts unfinished. It is her intention to gather these together as soon as possible and complete them for the book. Of late she has had a very heavy burden for the General Conference, as well as for individuals, and the work in South Africa and in Cooranbong. But now that the Conference is over, and she has written quite fully in regard to these other cases, she fully intends to devote her time to the manuscript. I have been almost consumed with anxiety to complete the book. I prepared some chapters with what material I had, thinking that she would not write more on these subjects. She did write on them, however, and I had my work to do over.--White Estate Received Correspondence File. (Written from Sunnyside, Cooranbong, Australia.)

Sunday, April 11, 1897, Marian Davis to W. C. White

I see that neither in Brother Jones' letter nor in yours have I stated definitely just what I am doing on the manuscript and why. In the first place, I have worked for a better opening to the chapters. As to the success of the effort, let any canvasser who examines the pages I have sent to Brother Jones bear testimony. The chapters of the old manuscript began too often with some notice of Jesus going here or there, until the book seemed almost like a diary. That has been corrected. Then I have tried to begin both chapters and paragraphs with short sentences, and indeed to simplify wherever possible, to drop out every needless word, and to make the work, as I have said, more compact and vigorous. On some chapters I had fresh, live matter that will add greatly to the interest of the book. If you would offer me, personally, a thousand dollars for the work that has been done on the book during the past few weeks, I would not look at it. I never realized the power of simplicity and compactness, as since I began this work. . . . When I think of the many thousands who will read the book, I want just as little human imperfection as possible to mar its divine beauty.--White Estate Received Correspondence File. (Written from Sunnyside, Cooranbong, Australia.)

Thursday, July 29, 1897, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia, EGW Diary Entry

I awaken at half past two, and offer up my prayer to God in the name of Jesus. I am weak in physical strength; my head is not free from pain; my left eye troubles me. In writing upon the life of Christ I am deeply wrought upon. I forget to breathe as I should. I cannot endure the intensity of feeling that comes over me as I think of what Christ has suffered in our world.--Manuscript 70, 1897, p. 1.

August 9, 1897, Marian Davis to W. C. White

I received notice from C. H. Jones that it was planned to publish "Desire of Ages" in the spring of '98, and in order to do this, all the copy must be in the hands of the printers as early as September, '97.

From what I learn of the artist's work, I cannot believe that the printers will be ready for the manuscript by September. They have now twenty-five chapters, as finally revised. Twenty-five more were prepared to send, but a few changes will have to be made in them, as I finish the later chapters. For this I am holding them. . . .

Sister White is constantly harassed with the thought that the manuscript should be sent to the printers at once. I wish it were possible to relieve her mind, for the anxiety makes it hard for her to write and for me to work. . . . Sister White seems inclined to write, and I have no doubt she will bring out many precious things. I hope it will be possible to get them into the book. There is one thing, however, that not even the most competent editor could do--that is prepare the manuscript before it is written.--White Estate Received Correspondence File. (Written from Sunnyside, Cooranbong, Australia.)

1897-98 Working Papers for The Desire of Ages

[Due to the lack of adequate space in the White Estate vault in Washington, D. C., a number of old White Estate documents and books have been stored for several years in boxes in nearby buildings where they have not been readily accessible. The recent allocation of additional space to the White Estate has made possible the opening of these boxes.

On May 16, 1979, James Nix found, in one of these storage boxes, part of the working papers used in the preparation of The Desire of Ages in Ellen White's office in Cooranbong, Australia, in 1897 and 1898. These papers comprise chapters 2 to 37 (pages 27 to 358) of the present book. The working papers are of special interest as they show what apparently were, in large measure at least, the final revisions made in the manuscript before it was sent from Australia to the Pacific Press.

The next three exhibits are xerox reproductions made from these Desire of Ages working papers. They include portions of pages 80-81, 98-99, and 331-332. The very legible handwriting on the first two pages has been tentatively identified as belonging to Maggie Hare, while the less legible handwriting on the third page is that of Marian Davis.]

Parsons-7.
~~Childhood-12~~

and on the way the pleasure of ^{traveling} journeying with friends and acquaintances ~~so~~ absorbed their attention, ~~that they~~ ^{and} ~~parents of Jesus~~ did not notice his absence till night came on. Then as they halted for rest, they missed the helpful hand of their child. Supposing him to be with their company, they had felt no anxiety. Young as he was, they had trusted him implicitly, expecting, ~~as a matter of course~~, that when ~~they~~ ^{always} needed, he would be ready to assist them, anticipating their wants as he had ~~ever~~ ^{always} done. But now their fears were roused. They searched for him throughout their company, but in vain. Shuddering they remembered how Herod had tried to destroy him in his infancy. ~~Representations against plotting to take his life~~ Dark forebodings filled their hearts, and they bitterly reproached themselves.

Returning to Jerusalem, they pursued their search. The next day as they mingled with the worshippers in the temple, their attention was arrested by a familiar voice. They could not mistake it: no other voice was like his, so serious and earnest, yet so full of melody.

In the school of the rabbis they found Jesus; in the midst of the priests and doctors of the law. Rejoiced as they were, they could not forget their grief and anxiety, and when he was alone with them, the mother said, in words that implied a rebuke, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."

"How is it that ye sought me?" answered Jesus, gently pointing to the cause of their suffering. "Wist ye not that I must be about

See p. 712

Voice

Baptist -3-

had a great spiritual truth, a truth that child of Abraham, and that of Mary, was to ~~be made manifest the truth~~ which we are so slow to learn and ~~so ready to forget~~ that which we are incapable ~~in ourselves~~ of doing any good thing, that which we cannot do, will be wrought by the power of God in every submissive and unbelieving soul. ~~As it was through faith that the child of promise was given, so it is through faith that spiritual life is begotten in the soul, and we are enabled to work the works of righteousness.~~

To the unbelieving question of Zacharias, the angel said, "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings." ~~It was Gabriel who had made known to Daniel the prophetic period which was to extend to the coming of Christ. The knowledge that the end of this period was near, had moved Zacharias to pray for the Messiah's advent. Now the very messenger through whom, five hundred years before, the prophecy was given, had come to announce that it was about to be fulfilled.~~

The words of the angel, "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God," ~~believe~~ ^{show} that he holds a position of high honor in the heavenly courts. When he came with the message to Daniel, he said, "There is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael [David] your prince." /Dan. 10:21./ Of all the ~~angels of heaven, Gabriel is most directly associated with Christ.~~ ^{saying} ~~It is Gabriel of whom the Saviour speaks when he says, in the Revelation, 'I am the angel which signifies by his angel unto his servant John.'~~ ^{And to} ~~with the revelation of the book of the seven seals, the angel~~

Invitation-6-

The Lord says, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee," ~~become his dwelling~~ ^{Isa. 26:3}
 "thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." /Dan. 10:12, Isa. 48:18./

^{There who} When we take Christ at his word, and surrender ^{their} our souls to his keeping, ^{will} our lives to his ordering, we shall find peace and quietude. Nothing of the world can make us sad when Jesus makes us glad by his presence. ^{their} In perfect acquiescence there is perfect ^{rest} peace. Our lives may seem a tangle, but as we commit ourselves to the wise Master-worker, he will bring out the pattern of life and character that will be to his own glory. ~~His ideal of perfect beauty will be wrought out in us; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.~~ /Phil. 4:7/
 And that character which expresses the glory, the character of Christ, will be received into the Paradise of God. A renovated race ^{shall} will walk with him in white, for they are worthy.

As through Jesus we enter into rest, heaven begins here. We respond to his invitation, Come, learn of me, and in thus coming we begin the life eternal. Heaven is a ceaseless approaching to God through Christ. The longer we are in the heaven of bliss, the more and still more of glory will be opened to us; and the more we know of God, the more intense will be our happiness. As we walk with Jesus in this life, we may be filled with his love, satisfied with his presence. All that human nature can bear, we may receive here. But what is this compared with the hereafter? There "are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall

Sunday, November 21, 1897, W. C. White to C. H. Jones

On returning from Sydney I showed Mother and Sister Davis the proofs which I had brought of chapter headings, vignettes, etc., for the new book. Some of them we like very well. About others we feel much disappointed. . . .

In looking at some photographs of the Mount of Olives, Mother told us how much more beautiful the country was in the time of Christ, that the places which are now bare and dreary were then beautified by magnificent trees and groves. O, I wish we could get some pictures that would represent these places as she has seen them. But I know not how to do this.--W. C. White Letter Book 11-A, p. 342. (Written from Cooranbong, Australia, to C. H. Jones in New York City.)

Tuesday, March 1, 1898, Marian Davis to Ellen White

This morning we mail "The Man of Sorrows," copied from the new matter you left; and the parable of the talents, for the parable book. The matter on the sower which was given to Minnie, she has copied. But that which was given to Miss Peck has not been done. If Miss Peck does not have time to do it soon, I think we will let Minnie take it, as I am anxious to get it into your hands, and you will want it all together, so as to know what you have. We will not send any on the sower till we can send all.

I have been gathering out the precious things from these new manuscripts on the early life of Jesus. Sent a number of new pages to California by the Vancouver mail, and shall send more for later chapters by the next mail. Two of those new articles on Christ's missionary work I let Brother James have to read in church. Last Sabbath he read the one which speaks of the Saviour's denying Himself of food to give to the poor. These things are unspeakably precious. I hope it is not too late to get them into the book. It has been a feast to work on this matter. . . .

I learn that our Sabbath Schools are soon to take up the study of the life of Christ. So the book will come out just in time to help them. I am so glad.

I will send a copy of a little I gathered out for the chapter, "In Joseph's Tomb." It supplies a link that was missing, and I think will be a real help to the book. . . .

I learn that the work of setting the book is underway, so we want to finish up the last chapters as soon as possible. Hope you will be able to send us, soon, the rest of the matter on Christ's ministry of healing, and, as soon as convenient, the rich man and Lazarus. I do hope the book on the parables can come out at the same time with the life of Christ.--White Estate Received Correspondence File. (Written from Sunnyside, Cooranbong, Australia.)

Thursday, March 10, 1898, Marian Davis to Ellen White

Minnie is sending you this morning the matter she has been copying. That on the sower is all we have--the article given to Miss Peck, and the manuscript left with me. Now, if you do not wish to add anything more, I can go on and finish the chapter, but shall wait to hear from you. The article I send, "No Reward but of Grace," the parable of the laborers, is the last of the matter that was prepared for the book. I had planned to let this close the book. The last paragraphs seem to me very precious. The parable of the talents, which comes just before this, has set forth the importance of working, using every power for God, and this shows the spirit in which the work should be done. A few sentences you will recognize as from a letter lately written--"The golden gate is not opened to the proud in spirit. But the everlasting portals will open wide to the trembling touch of a little child."

You left me a manuscript on the unjust steward, and I have been collecting material to complete this, and have found some precious things to add to the closing chapters of the life of Christ. Of course I cannot compile the chapters (the last two) until I receive what you write on the ministry of healing.--White Estate Received Correspondence File. (Written from Sunnyside, Cooranbong, Australia.)

Monday, March 21, 1898, Marian Davis to Ellen White

The matter you sent on the ministry of healing was just what was wanted. I have used as much as I could get into the chapter, "Go Teach All Nations." When Minnie comes home I will have it copied, and send you a copy. I am so glad we could get these things into the book, for they add greatly to its value and helpfulness. Brother White thinks it best to send the last two chapters, "Go Teach All Nations," and "To My Father and Your Father," by the boat that goes on Sabbath. I have no idea they are ready for them yet, but he thinks it will encourage them to push forward the work, and I shall send them. I feel in such a hurry for the book to come out. I hardly know how to wait, but the waiting gives time to work up the parables, and it will be so good to have both come out at the same time.

I have used some of the new matter on the parables, and shall go right on with the work. I want to get into the book just as much as possible of the fresh matter on nature teaching.

These things have been a feast to me. I want my heart enlarged and my mind enlarged to take in these grand, great principles.--White Estate Received Correspondence File. (Written from Sunnyside, Cooranbong, NSW, to Ellen White who was at Melbourne.)

Monday, June 6, 1898, Marian Davis to Miss E. J. Burnham

By this mail we send index. It is not properly finished. Has been verified only to page 32. The girls worked almost all night to do that, and the revising. We must ask you to verify, as you will have to substitute the type numbering for MS numbering of pages. . . . I worked all night last night. . . .

Sister White has read all the chapters, and expresses herself much pleased with them.--W. C. White Letter Book 10-A, pp. 145-6. (Written from Cooranbong, Australia, to Miss Burnham at the Pacific Press in Oakland, California.)

Wednesday, June 15, 1898, Marian Davis to Miss E. J. Burnham

Your letter of May 16, with proofs, received. I have hastily read the pages. Except one or two trifling errors, the text is all right. I can't tell you how great relief I feel on seeing so much of the matter in type, and straight. Have been almost consumed with anxiety in thinking of the possibilities for so many insertions sent so far away. I am unspeakably thankful to God, whose good hand is over the work, that He has made it possible for you to have it in charge, and I hope that no word of mine may bring on you any needless burden. . . .

In the preface, would it not be well to state, in some way, that this book is not a harmony of the gospels, that it does not attempt to teach chronology. Its purpose is to present the love of God, the divine beauty of the life of Christ, not to satisfy the questioning of critics. The above may not be the best way to put it. It is intended only as a suggestion.--W. C. White Letter Book 10-A, pp. 166-8. (Written from Cooranbong, Australia, to Miss Burnham at the Pacific Press in Oakland, California.)

Monday, March 5, 1900, Marian Davis to Marius Christensen

Many persons seem to attach far more value to an unpublished manuscript of Sister White than to the matter printed in books. But in all she has written I know of nothing better than the things to which reference has been given. In such books as Desire of Ages, have been carefully gathered together many of the most precious things which she has written during a score of years.--W. C. White Letter Book 10-A, pp. 203-4. (Written from Cooranbong to Marius Christensen in Hayward, Minnesota.)

Monday, April 23, 1900, Sunnyside, Cooranbong, Australia, EGW to G. A. Irwin*

Dear Brother: . . . My copyists you have seen. They do not change my language. It stands as I write it.

Marian's work is of a different order altogether. She is my bookmaker. A___ never was my bookmaker. How are my books made? Marian does not put in her claim for recognition. She does her work in this way: She takes my articles which are published in the papers, and pastes them in blank books. She also has a copy of all the letters I write. In preparing a chapter for a book, Marian remembers that I have written something on that special point, which may make the matter more forcible. She begins to search for this, and if when she finds it, she sees that it will make the chapter more clear, she adds it.

The books are not Marian's productions, but my own, gathered from all my writings. Marian has a large field from which to draw, and her ability to arrange the matter is of great value to me. It saves my poring over a mass of matter, which I have no time to do.

So you understand that Marian is a most valuable help to me in bringing out my books. A___ had none of this work to do. Marian has read chapters to her, and A___ has sometimes made suggestions as to the arrangement of the matter.

This is the difference between the workers. As I have stated, A___ has been strictly forbidden to change my words for her words. As spoken by the heavenly agencies, the words are severe in their simplicity; and I try to put the thoughts into such simple language that a child can understand every word uttered. The words of someone else would not rightly represent me.

I have written thus fully in order that you may understand the matter. A___ may claim that she has made my books, but she has not done so. This has been Marian's field, and her work is far in advance of any work A___ has done for me.--Letter 61a, 1900, pp. 4-5. (The first part of this quotation appears in The Ministry, December, 1975, pp. 14, 15).

Monday, April 23, 1900, Marian Davis to G. A. Irwin

A report in circulation in Battle Creek has just come to my notice. Lest, through this report, any should be led to reject the instruction and warning of the Spirit of God, I feel it a duty to say what I know in regard to the matter in question.

It is reported that the writing of a testimony for a prominent man in Battle Creek was intrusted to one of Sister White's former workers, or that she was given matter for him, with instruction to fill out the points, so that the testimony was virtually her work.

I cannot think that anyone who has been connected with Sister White's work could make such a statement as this. I cannot think that anyone who is acquainted with Sister White's manner of writing could possibly believe it. The burden she feels when the case of an individual is presented before her, the intense pressure under which she works, often rising at midnight to write out the warnings given her, and often for days, weeks, or even months, writing again and again concerning it,

* President of the General Conference, 1897-1901.

as if she could not free herself from the feeling of responsibility for that soul.--no one who has known anything of [these] experiences, could believe that she would intrust to another the writing of a testimony.

For more than twenty years I have been connected with Sister White's work. During this time I have never been asked either to write out a testimony from oral instruction, or to fill out the points in matter already written. The one who is reported to have made the statement was never, to my knowledge, either asked or permitted to do such a thing. And from my own knowledge of the work, as well as from the statements of Sister White herself, I have the strongest possible ground for disbelieving that such a thing was done.--W. C. White Letter Book 10-A, pp. 207-8. (Written from Sunnyside, Cooranbong, Australia.)

Monday, May 7, 1900, W. C. White to G. A. Irwin

Sometimes when Mother's mind is rested, and free, the thoughts are presented in language that is not only clear and strong, but beautiful and correct; and at times when she is weary and oppressed with heavy burdens of anxiety, or when the subject is difficult to portray, there are repetitions and ungrammatical sentences.

Mother's copyists are entrusted with the work of correcting grammatical errors, of eliminating unnecessary repetitions, and of grouping paragraphs and sections in their best order. If a passage is not fully understood, the copyist asks its full meaning and proper connection. When corrected and plainly copied with the typewriter or the pen, the manuscripts are all carefully examined by Mother, and corrected, wherever correction is required, and then copied again, if the corrections are numerous. This is done with many manuscripts, not only because corrections are made in the work of the copyist, but because Mother sees a way to express the thought a little more clearly or more fully.

Often Mother writes out a matter the second time, because she feels that it is very difficult to put in writing the scene or events, as they are presented to her.

Mother's workers of experience, such as Sisters Davis, Burnham, Bolton, Peck and Hare, who are very familiar with her writings, are authorized to take a sentence, paragraph, or section from one manuscript and incorporate it with another manuscript where the same thought was expressed but not so clearly. But none of Mother's workers are authorized to add to the manuscripts by introducing thoughts of their own. They are instructed that it is the words and thoughts that Mother has written, or spoken, that are to be used.-- W. C. White Letter File, White Estate.

Monday, May 21, 1900, Sunnyside, Cooranbong, Australia, EGW to G. A. Irwin

Dear Brother Irwin: . . . God would be pleased to see The Desire of Ages in every home. In this book is contained the light He has given upon His word. To our canvassers I would say, Go forth with your hearts softened and subdued by reading of the life of Christ. Drink deeply of the water of salvation, that it may be in your heart as a living spring, flowing forth to refresh souls ready to perish.--Letter 75, 1900. (Colporteur Ministry, pp. 126-127.)

Wednesday, June 20, 1900, Sunnyside, Cooranbong, Australia, EGW to Edson & Emma White

Dear Children Edson and Emma: I received your letter,*Edson. In regard to The Desire of Ages, when you meet with those who have criticisms to make, as will always be the case, do not take any notice of the supposed mistakes, but praise the book, tell of its advantages. The Desire of Ages would have been the same size as the two former books had it not been for the strong recommendation of Brother B. who was then General Canvassing Agent. What you say about the appendix is the first objection we have heard regarding that feature. Many have spoken of the great help they have found in the appendix. If people are prejudiced against anything that makes prominent the Sabbath, that very objection shows the necessity of it being there to convict minds.

Let us be guarded. Let us refuse to allow the criticisms of anyone to imprint objections on our minds. Let critics live by their trade of criticism. They cannot speak in favor of the very best of blessings without attaching a criticism to cast a shadow of reproach. Let us educate ourselves to praise that which is good when others criticize. Murmurers will always pick flaws, but let us not be saddened by the accusing element. Let us not consider it a virtue to make and suggest difficulties which one mind and another will bring in to harass and perplex.--Letter 87, 1900, pp. 1,2.

Sunday, August 10, 1902, Elmhaven, St. Helena, California, EGW to her sister Mary

My dear sister Mary [Foss]: . . . Now, my sister, do not think that I have forgotten you; for I have not. You know that I have books to make. My last effort is a book on true education. The writing of this book has been very trying to me, but it is nearly finished. I am now completing the last chapter. This book will not have in it so much matter as there is in some of my larger works, but the instruction it contains is important. I feel the need of help from God continually.

*James Edson White's letter to his mother, dated May 11, 1900, involved criticisms of the size, format, price and illustrations of Desire of Ages. He also objected to the appendix in the first edition, asking "What is the use of pitching into other people's beliefs in the way it is done in this appendix?" He argued that such material made it difficult for literature evangelists to sell the book.

I am still as active as ever. I am not in the least decrepit. I am able to do much work, writing and speaking as I did years ago.

I read over all that is copied, to see that everything is as it should be. I read all the book manuscript before it is sent to the printer. So you can see that my time must be fully occupied. Besides writing, I am called upon to speak to the different churches, and to attend important meetings. I could not do this work unless the Lord helped me.--Letter 133, 1902, pp. 1-2.

Tuesday, January 6, 1903, Elmhaven, Sanitarium, California, EGW to Elder and Mrs. J. A. Burden

Dear Brother and Sister Burden: . . . I feel very thankful for the help of Sister Marian Davis in getting out my books. She gathers materials from my diaries, from my letters, and from the articles published in the papers. I greatly prize her faithful service. She has been with me for twenty-five years, and has constantly been gaining increasing ability for the work of classifying and grouping my writings.--Letter 9, 1903.(The Ministry, December, 1975, p. 15.)

Cir. September 26, 1904, Elmhaven, St. Helena, California, EGW Manuscript, "A Tribute to Marian Davis"

Marian, my helper, faithful and true as the compass to the pole in her work, is dying. . . .

I am leaving tomorrow for Battle Creek. Yet my soul is drawn to the dying girl who has served me for the last twenty-five years. We have stood side by side in the work, and in perfect harmony in that work. And when she would be gathering up the precious jots and tittles that had come in papers and books and present it to me, "Now," she would say, "there is something wanted. I cannot supply it." I would look it over, and in one moment I could trace the line right out.

We worked together, just worked together in perfect harmony all the time. She is dying. And it is devotion to the work. She takes the intensity of it as though it were a reality, and we both have entered into it with an intensity to have every paragraph that shall stand in its right place, and show its right work.--Manuscript 95, 1904, p. 1.

Tuesday, March 6, 1906, Sanitarium, California, Ellen White to the Brethren Assembled in Council at Graysville, Tennessee

Dear Fellow Laborers: . . . How many have read carefully Patriarchs and Prophets, The Great Controversy, and The Desire of Ages? I wish all to understand that my confidence in the light that God has given stands firm, because I know that the Holy Spirit's power magnified the truth, and made it honorable, saying: "This is the way, walk ye in it." In my books, the truth is stated, barricaded by a "Thus saith the Lord."

The Holy Spirit traced these truths upon my heart and mind as indelibly as the law was traced by the finger of God, upon the tables of stone, which are now in the ark, to be brought forth in that great day when sentence will be pronounced against every evil, seducing science produced by the father of lies.--Letter 90, 1906. (Colporteur Ministry, p. 126.)

Monday, August 17, 1931, New York City, H. Camden Lacey* to D. E. Robinson

My dear Brother Robinson: In regard to SIGNIFICANT UTTERANCE No. 1 I can say nothing, as I am not the 'prominent S. D. A. minister in Washington, D. C.' who made that statement.

With reference to the second SIGNIFICANT UTTERANCE you quote, the facts are as follows:--

In 1895, upon my return to Australia from Battle Creek, Michigan Miss Marian Davis urged me repeatedly to help her in editing the MSS for The Desire of Ages then under preparation. I put her off as long as I could, as I did not feel capable of rendering any special assistance, but finally I yielded to her importunities and, after receiving the MSS of certain chapters, I made some suggestions which she seemed glad to accept. Now I cannot remember any details relative to those suggestions, other than that I have a vivid recollection that she seemed anxious to have certain sentences logically connected. We therefore re-arranged some of them, and I have an impression that there was some necessary rewording done. But I am certain that there was no altering of the thought anywhere.

With reference to the first chapter, I have a more vivid recollection. I remember that Sr. Davis was greatly worried about it. She did not seem to have sufficient material to fill it out sufficiently well. It was repeatedly revised, and I think that Elder W. W. Prescott and Br. E. R. Palmer were frequently consulted as to its composition. Finally it assumed the form in which it now appears in the Desire of Ages.

At the Bible Conference in Washington, D. C. in 1919, during a discussion on this point of the editing of Sr. White's writings, I said, that in my opinion it would be well for the clarifying of the whole question before the people if the fact was clearly stated somewhere (I meant, on the title page or in the preface) that the Desire of Ages was written by Mrs. E. G. White, and edited by Miss Marian Davis.

I did not use the words quoted 'for she wrote it' (referring to Miss Marian Davis).

I did say that she came to me to get help to prepare the first chapter especially, as she seemed to be much concerned over its final form.

Hoping these simple statements will be of service in rebutting those who seem to be persisting in misrepresenting what was really said at the Bible Conference referred to,

I remain, Sincerely yours in the Faith of this Truth.--White Estate Document File 52a.

* Elder Lacey was the brother of W. C. White's second wife.

Tuesday, May 22, 1934, W. C. White to Mrs. Maggie H. Bree

For years it was our practice to place in her [Miss Davis'] hands a copy of every article sent off for publication and of all principal letters and testimonies. These she . . . read with avidity, and . . . marked those passages that she considered especially useful for the making of chapters for books which she had in contemplation. . . .

Sister Davis had a wonderful memory, and this was of great service in her work of searching for and grouping together the choicest things that Sister White had written regarding Christ in His ministry as a Healer [and] in regard to Christ as an Example of medical missionaries and medical evangelists. . . .

When a goodly number of extracts had been gathered and grouped together as possible material for chapters, they were read to Sister White. This revived her memory of the . . . scenes presented to her, and she entered . . . into the work of rewriting many chapters, giving them a fresh touch and greater vigor, also adapting the various passages . . . more fully to the people who would read this book. . . .

Time and time again in Sister White's room, was discussed the object and the best plan for the book--(a) whom the book would serve; (b) how much room should be given to each subject; (c) what was the best relationship of the great subjects with which it should deal.

After chapters were thus formed, they were carefully read again by Sister White and then submitted to the printer.--W. C. White Correspondence File, White Estate.

Friday, July 24, 1936, H. Camden Lacey to an Adventist Minister in New York

The enclosed copy of your amazing letter to Elder W. C. White has been forwarded to me to answer.

First, let me say unqualifiedly, and as before God as witness, that I never made the statement--at any time or to anyone--which you refer to when you say "that Elder Lacey while he was here has been telling various ones that he and not Sister White is the author of Desire of Ages." I never made such a statement.

Secondly, I gladly and with all my heart accept The Desire of Ages as an inspired book; indeed I regard it as the most spiritual Life of Christ, outside the Gospels, ever given to His Church. In my own Bible, on extra sheets gummed in at the front and the back, I have scores of extracts taken from this wonderful book, and from other writings of Sister White. I value them as products of the same "Spirit of Prophecy" as indited the Scriptures. And thousands of my hearers in church and classroom will bear witness to that.

You ask for "a brief statement of the facts in the case." They are these:

Miss Marian Davis, who was entrusted with the preparation of Desire of Ages, frequently came to me in 1895 and 1896 asking help in the arrangement of the material which she gathered from Sister White's various manuscripts. Sister Davis was a warm personal friend of mine, and I did the best I knew how to aid her, especially in the first chapter. As I recall it, this help was only in the arrangement of the sentences and paragraphs, or the choice of a more suitable word. Never at any time, was there any alteration of the thought, or the insertion of an idea that was not already expressed in the original text. The resultant "copy" was always submitted to Sister White herself for final approval.

The entire Desire of Ages as it is now printed is, therefore, I hold, the product of Sister White's mind and heart, guided by the good Spirit of God. And the "editing" was merely technical.

If I mentioned these facts to anyone in New York, it must have been in consequence of some situation arising like the present--the revival of that preposterous rumor dating back to the Bible Teachers' Council of 1919 in Washington, when I was first charged with saying that I had written the book. There was no foundation then or since for such a ridiculous and malicious charge.

Further, let me say that so far from belittling or disparaging the Testimonies, I have ever upheld them, and quoted largely from them in my public ministry. It was because of that that the Greater New York Book and Bible House gave me, for the Temple Church in 1930 an entire set of the writings of Sister White; and at the time the gift was made, that thought was expressed by the donor.

In conclusion, may I ask, Brother C_____, why you did not come to me personally when you first heard these rumors which you say you have heard "ever since you came to labor in New York City." We were associated in Christian work together for several years in that great center, and there was abundant opportunity for you to come to me as a brother minister and ask for the facts then. Had you done that, just a kind thing for any Christian to do, these malicious rumors would have been strangled at their birth. Has not your failure to do so made you a partner in this misrepresentation?

Some amends may perhaps yet be made by your going at once to each "reporter" and showing him this letter.

I am sending a copy to Elder White, and another copy, with your letter, to Elder M. N. Campbell.--White Estate Document File #508. (Written from Loma Linda, California.)

Exhibits Compiled by
Ron Graybill and Robert W. Olson
Ellen G. White Estate
Washington, D. C.
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